The Dispute between Ilan Pappe & Benny Morris

Three Texts

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Politics by Other Means

By Benny Morris, March 22, 2004. Originally published on The New Republic.

A History of Modern Palestine:
One Land, Two Peoples
By Ilan Pappe
(Cambridge University Press, 333 pp., $22)

Ilan Pappe and I walked a stretch together in uneasy companionship, but we have now parted ways. In the late 1980s and early 1990s we belonged to a group dubbed the "New Historians" of Israel, which also included Avi Shlaim and Tom Segev. This group, contrary to the conspiratorial image projected by our critics, was never a close-knit or monolithic school of intellectuals who plotted together around the table at Friday-night meals. Some of us barely knew one another. Each, in different institutions and different cities and different countries (indeed, only Pappe was on the faculty of an Israeli university), had plied his craft alone and reached his conclusions on his own. But we had all written histories focusing on Israel and Palestine in the 1940s, and they had all appeared, mostly in English, in the late 1980s, and taken together they had shaken the Zionist historiographic establishment and permanently undermined the traditional Zionist narrative of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

In some measure, our histories also undermined the traditional Arab narratives of the conflict (as in my book *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949,* which argued that there had been no Zionist master plan of expulsion and that no systematic policy of expulsion was implemented in 1948). But the thrust of the "New Historiography" was that the century-old conflict was not a straightforward clash between good and evil, that it could not be properly understood in black-and-white terms. Both sides, it was implied if not argued explicitly, had strong claims, and both sides had just grievances. The documentation released in American, British, U.N., and (principally) Israeli archives in the 1980s showed that the Zionist side was not blameless in the conflict, and had sometimes made wrong decisions and indulged in policies and practices that were morally dubious if not downright unethical.

But that was the limit of our consensus. Propagandistic or official historians usually sound the same happy note, and for the same reasons; but dissenting historians usually are polyphonic, and the relationships among them are often troubled, if not flatly unhappy. In the case of Pappe and myself, there was always methodological discord. We both knew that official Zionist historiography was deeply flawed and needed to be reassessed and rewritten on the basis of the evidence that had become available; but we approached history, and the writing of history, from antithetical standpoints. Pappe regarded history through the prism of contemporary politics and consciously wrote history with an eye to serving political ends. My own view was that while historians, as citizens, had political views and aims, their scholarly task was to try to arrive at the truth about a historical event or process, to illuminate the past as objectively and accurately as possible. I believed, and still believe, that

there is such a thing as historical truth; that it exists independently of, and can be detached from, the subjectivities of scholars; that it is the historian's duty to try to reach it by using as many and as varied sources as he can. When writing history, the historian should ignore contemporary politics and struggle against his political inclinations as he tries to penetrate the murk of the past. Pappe—and, implicitly, my Zionist critics such as Anita Shapira and Shabtai Teveth—have argued that no one is capable of abandoning his educational, ideological, and political baggage, and that I, too, have been motivated, consciously or subconsciously, by my politics and have reflected (according to Pappe) my solid Zionist convictions or (according to the establishment Zionists) my solid anti-Zionist convictions.

FROM THE FIRST PAPPE allowed his politics to hold sway over his history. Initially he was rather restrained. His first book, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-51, published in 1988*, was bland and flat in tone. Perhaps this was due to its origins as a doctoral dissertation; perhaps there were other reasons. In any event, the book avoided blunt iconoclasm, and its innovations are extremely hesitant (unlike Avi Shlaim in his Collusion Across the Jordan, published the same year, where it was trenchantly argued that the Yishuv—the Jewish community in Palestine—and the Hashemite rulers of Jordan had colluded to limit their war in 1948 and to nip in the bud the emergence of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, as endorsed by the U.N. partition resolution of November 1947). In his second book, The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951, which appeared in 1992, Pappe allowed his politics more leeway, and they are apparent in his descriptions and in his interpretations; but here, too, there is an effort toward objectivity and accuracy.

In both books Pappe in effect tells his readers: "This is what happened." This is strange, because it directly conflicts with a second major element in his historiographical outlook. Pappe is a proud postmodernist. He believes that there is no such thing as historical truth, only a collection of narratives as numerous as the participants in any given event or process; and each narrative, each perspective, is as valid and legitimate, as true, as the next. Moreover, every narrative is inherently political and, consciously or not, serves political ends. Each historian is justified in shaping his narrative to promote particular political purposes. Shlomo Aronson, an Israeli political scientist, years ago confronted Pappe with the ultimate problem regarding historical relativism: if all narratives are equally legitimate and there is no historical truth, then the narrative of Holocaust deniers is as valid as that of Holocaust affirmers. Pappe did not offer a persuasive answer, beyond asserting lamely that there exists a large body of indisputable oral testimony affirming that the Holocaust took place.

This broaches the third element in Pappe's historiographical approach: his faith that oral testimony is valuable and valid, and that historians should base their narratives also on the testimony and the memory of witnesses, even decades after the event. But in his new book, as in his previous books, Pappe makes no use at all—or almost no use—of oral testimony, basing his work on primary and secondary written sources. Perhaps he does not really

believe in the value of oral history; or perhaps he found the work involved too stressful and time-consuming. In any event, *A History of Modern Palestine* makes no use of oral sources.

My own view is that the historian must base his work on primary written sources, that is, on contemporaneous documents, and must be exceedingly wary of oral history, especially when the events that are being remembered are morally sensitive and politically charged, and occurred many years ago. In the absence of contemporary documents, the historian may occasionally draw upon oral testimony for "color" or a sense of atmosphere, but never to reconstruct what actually happened.

Since so much of the debate about the New Historians is political, I should add that Pappe and I differ not only in our methods but also in our politics. We are both men of the left; but whereas since the late 1960s I have consistently voted Labor or Meretz (a Zionist party to the left of Labor), Pappe, so far as I know, has always voted the Israel Communist Party ticket (under its different names) and has figured repeatedly in the party's list of Knesset candidates. During the past few years Pappe has veered even further leftward. Although his party still advocates a two-state solution, Pappe, like his mentor Edward Said, believes that the only solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is a single bi-national state in all of Palestine. (I shall return to this theme.)

SO, AS I SAY, PAPPE AND I ALWAYS were uncomfortable companions in our historical travels. The outbreak, at the end of September 2000, of the current intifada, which I regard as a Palestinian rebellion against the occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and as a political-terroristic assault on Israel's existence (and also as an offshoot of fundamentalist Islam's ongoing assault on the West, in which Israel, unfortunately, figures as a front-line outpost), has, like a giant centrifuge, sent the New Historians spinning toward opposite corners of the political universe. It has separated the anti-Zionist goats from the Zionist sheep, and has accentuated their goatish and sheepish natures. By now it would not be incorrect to call Pappe, as well as Shlaim, an anti-Zionist.

Shlaim's *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, which was published five years ago, is highly critical of the Zionist movement and Israel. Since the start of the current intifada, he has moved steadily to the left—or is it, really, to the right? After all, he shares his anti-Israeli analysis with European neo-fascists and the Islamic jihadists, who openly advocate Israel's destruction in the name of medieval religious values. In an op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune*, Shlaim recently identified with the anti-Semitic British official James Troutbeck, who in June, 1948 described the emergent state of Israel—the one that had just been assaulted by a bevy of Arab states, in defiance of the United Nations Partition Resolution of November, 1947—as a gangster state headed by "an utterly unscrupulous set of leaders." "Today," Shlaim continued, "a similar sense of moral outrage is felt toward the rightist government of Ariel Sharon by people throughout the world."

As for Pappe, the outbreak of the Palestinian revolt has thrust him into academic and political prominence as one of the most outspoken Israeli advocates of a Western boycott of

Israel's universities. During the past three years, many pro-Palestinian academics in the West have campaigned (not very successfully) to persuade their universities to cut off contact with their Israeli counterparts and to block research and investment funds from reaching Israel's universities; academic journals have refused to consider or to publish papers by Israelis; a handful of academics have refused to supervise Israeli postgraduate students; and scholars, such as Eugene Rogan, head of the Middle East Centre at Oxford's St. Antony's College, have refused to give lectures in a country governed by Ariel Sharon (presumably they would give lectures in countries run by the likes of Bashar al-Assad and the Ayatollah Khamenei). Pappe has been at the forefront of this effort. It is worth noting that he has not declined to receive wages from a university subsidized by the government whose policies he finds so repulsive. It is also worth noting—here Pappe's logic becomes as flawed as his ethics—that Israel's academic community, the one that has been boycotted by "progressives" in the West, has been in the vanguard of the struggle within Israel to recognize the Palestinians and to reach a political compromise. Israel's universities, as Prime Minister Sharon and Education Minister Limor Livnat regularly recognize, are a mainstay of the Israeli left—and none more so than Haifa University, Pappe's own institution, which has the highest proportion of Arab staff and students (the latter about 20 percent) in Israel.

THIS HAS BEEN PAPPE'S POLITICAL evolution. *A History of Modern Palestine* is a milestone in his evolution as an historian. He sets out to tell the story of Palestine, which he far less frequently also refers to as the Land of Israel, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, starting with Napoleon's invasion in 1799. It is mainly the story of two peoples—Arabs and Jews—and the interaction between them. Needless to say, a great many pages are devoted to the development of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; but Pappe is at pains, as he tells us in his foreword, not to confine himself to the usual tale of high politics and military history—to the thoughts, the words, and the actions of leaders and generals. In keeping with the politically correct norms of the profession in the contemporary West, he focuses, rather, on "the victims" of "the invasions, occupations, expulsions, discrimination and racism" to which Palestine has been subject. His "heroes," he says, are the "women, children, peasants, workers, ordinary city dwellers, peaceniks, human rights activists"—and his "`villains' ... the arrogant generals, the greedy politicians, the cynical statesmen and the misogynist men."

It goes almost without saying that Pappe's "victims" are primarily Palestine's Arabs; and all, or almost all, of the "greedy" and the "cynical" are Israelis. In fairness I should add that he does dish up some "misogynist" Palestinians, which is not surprising, given the fact that in Arab and Islamic societies women are by tradition, and often by law, third-class members, who often lack basic rights (in some countries they have no vote, in others they cannot drive cars, and so on). In this respect, Palestinian society is similar to Syrian or Jordanian or Egyptian society, but Pappe papers this over by repeatedly pointing to the continuously "improving" nature of Palestinian women's status at certain points in time—for example, during the two Palestinian intifadas or rebellions against Israel.

Unfortunately, much of what Pappe tries to sell his readers is complete fabrication. In trying to demonstrate women's growing political involvement (and, incidentally, Israeli beastliness), he tells us at one point that "one third of the overall [Palestinian] casualties [in the intifada of 1987-1991] were women," and that "rural women" took "a central role, boldly confronting the army." Among urban women, the proportion of participants in the intifada was even higher, he says. All of this is pure invention. In fact, women constituted about 5 percent of the Palestinian casualties in the first intifada. According to B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights group, eleven hundred Palestinians died at the hands of Israeli army and security personnel during that uprising, and of these, fifty-six were women. Even a cursory glance at film footage of the intifada's riots shows that there were generally no female participants. Women did make an appearance, in small numbers, when pleading with soldiers not to take away arrested men for questioning or when mourning male casualties lying bloodied in the streets; but the women remained remarkably absent from the front lines of the intifada—as they remained, and still remain, absent from the front lines of the current intifada and from the coffee shops of the West Bank and Gaza and other venues where serious matters in the Arab Middle East are discussed, and sometimes decided. Indeed, the recent surge in Islamic fundamentalism in Palestinian society has restricted women even more firmly to hearth and home than was the case before the 1970s. Arafat, with his good sense for public relations, inducted two women—Hanan Ashrawi and Umm Jihad—into the political elite, and Arafat's Fatah has dispatched a handful of female suicide bombers into Israel's cities, but these are token representations of a gender that is essentially disempowered in Palestinian society.

Pappe's periodic insertion of women into the unfolding history is artificial, often absurd, and occasionally without foundation in the sources. He tells us—without offering any source or concrete example—that, following the Young Turks' reformist revolution in Istanbul in 1908, "women [in Palestine] too—but the elite only—began attempting to change their lives.... They organized on a gender basis for the first time." Organized what? He doesn't tell us. And then he adds: "True, only among the Zionist immigrants did women actually work—but even here rhetoric was more abundant than fundamental change in gender relations." In other words, after completely inventing a small feminist revolution among Palestinian women, Pappe, implicitly admitting that nothing of the sort occurred, goes on to assail the Zionists for being no better. The comparison is ridiculous. While women were certainly discriminated against in the workplace and in wages, they have always been full citizens in the Zionist community: they worked in the fields and factories, and they voted for candidates in the Zionist institutions, and they were elected to office. There was nothing comparable in pre-1948 Palestinian Arab society.

Since contemporary historiography apparently requires it, Pappe also injects children into Palestinian social history. Children were always there, of course, but very few sources discuss them, and their impact on the development of Palestine, at least until the intifadas, was probably insubstantial. Yet a politically correct historian worth his spurs cannot exclude

them, and so Pappe writes: "It is also possible to say that 1908 marked a new beginning for children in Palestine." What he means by this assertion, or on what he bases it, is never elucidated. Did children suddenly get the vote? Did they get more candy? Did they cry less? Pappe does not say. What he does say is that in the Palestinian Arab school system corporal punishment continued to be the norm through the first half of the twentieth century. He also assumes that, since the Young Turks revolution of 1908 led to an increase in education throughout the Ottoman Empire, there must have been more or better schooling in Palestine too, hence the improvement in the lot of Palestinian children. (But if children were being routinely flogged in the schools, perhaps an increase in schooling—if this in fact occurred—would not necessarily have been a good thing.)

Keeping up with historiographical fashion leads to confusion. Nations and nation-states are retrograde and nasty, almost by definition. At the outset of his book Pappe informs his readers that he intends to "de-nationalize" the history of modern Palestine: a worthy postcolonial or at least postmodern goal. But how does one "de-nationalize" what is essentially a history of a conflict between two nations or peoples? One strategy, seemingly—it is the one Pappe adopts—would be to focus on the economic and social developments in Palestine rather than on the country's politics. But alas, here, too, the historian immediately comes up against the "national" problem, inasmuch as Palestine's two national or ethnic communities essentially developed and grew separately, on national lines. Indeed, by the 1920s they had even spawned two separate "national" economies.

Pappe recognizes the trap almost as soon as the word "de-nationalize" escapes his lips, and in mid-paragraph he dexterously switches gears, telling his readers that, at the least, he intends to "bi-nationalize" his history: unlike many of his predecessors from the Zionist and Arab camps, he will tell Palestine's history from both the Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish perspectives. And as the book unfolds, Pappe describes the separate socio-economic and political development of each people at each stage of the country's history before reviewing their interactions.

IT ALL SOUNDS VERY REASONABLE and very tolerant, but in fact Modern Palestine is really the story of one people, the Palestinians, who, according to Pappe, unequivocally "turn towards ... nationalism" in 1912 (most historians would place this "turn" a bit later, in the 1920s and 1930s). They are put upon and invaded and subjugated and in part exiled by another people, an invading people, the Zionist Jews. Pappe barely mentions the Jewish habitation of, and rule over, Israel during the thousand years between Joshua's invasion and the crushing of the Bar-Kochba Revolt against Rome in 135 C.E. And while he mentions the causes that during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries propelled a fraction of the Jewish people to head for the land in the Levant—anti-Semitic discrimination and violence in the Christian, and later the Muslim, world—Pappe's heart is clearly not in it. He sees the "invasion" and the inevitable clash solely from the Arabs' perspective.

In Pappe's account, there is no faulting the Palestinians for regularly assaulting the Zionist enterprise—in 1920, 1921, 1929, 1936-39, 1947-48, the late 1960s and early 1970s, 1987, and 2000—as there can be no criticizing them for rejecting the various compromises offered by the British, the Americans, the Jews, and the world community in 1937, 1947, 1977-1978, and 2000. The Palestinians are forever victims, the Zionists are forever "brutal colonizers." To his credit, Pappe wears his heart on his sleeve. There is no dissembling here. He even tells us in his acknowledgments—as if he cannot wait to inform his readers of his loyalties— that while his "native tongue is Hebrew," "today [he] converses more and more in Arabic," and his "love of the country [Palestine]" is matched only by his "dislike of the state [Israel]."

TONY JUDT ONCE DESCRIBED in these pages an encounter with students in a graduate seminar in modern European history in an American university:

After some probing ... [the] students would start to confess that they were actually in a state of panic. To be sure, they could expatiate at length on theories of nationalism. They had mastered the disputes surrounding the nature of fascism or the gendered impact of industrialization. They knew how to "explain" history.... But they had not the foggiest notion what happened, when it happened, who did it, or why.

They simply did not know history. Judt could almost have been describing Ilan Pappe, his colleague in the "one-state solution." Pappe, too, is mortally ignorant of the basic facts of the Israeli-Arab conflict. This book is awash with errors of a quantity and a quality that are not found in serious historiography. And, in Pappe's case, it is not just a matter of sloppiness or indolence in checking facts; the problem goes deeper. It can almost be called a deliberate system of error.

The multiplicity of mistakes on each page is a product of both Pappe's historical methodology and his political proclivities. He seems to admit as much when he writes early on that

my [pro-Palestinian] bias is apparent despite the desire of my peers that I stick to facts and the `truth' when reconstructing past realities. I view any such construction as vain and presumptuous. This book is written by one who admits compassion for the colonized not the colonizer; who sympathizes with the occupied not the occupiers; and sides with the workers not the bosses. He feels for women in distress, and has little admiration for men in command.... Mine is a subjective approach....

For those enamored with subjectivity and in thrall to historical relativism, a fact is not a fact and accuracy is unattainable. Why grope for the truth? Narrativity is all. So no reader should be surprised to discover that, according to Pappe, the Stern Gang and the Palmach existed "before the revolt" of 1936 (they were established in 1940-1941); that the Palmach "between 1946 and 1948" fought against the British (in 1947-1948 it did not); that Ben-Gurion in 1929 was chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive (he was chairman from 1935 to

1948); that the Arab Higher Committee was established "by 1934" (it was set up in 1936); that the Arab Legion did not withdraw from Palestine, along with the British, in May, 1948 (most of its units did); that the United Nations' partition proposal of November 29, 1947 had "an equal number of supporters and detractors" (the vote was thirty-three for, thirteen against, and ten abstentions); that the "Jewish forces [were] better equipped" than the invading Arab armies in May, 1948 (they were not, by any stretch of the imagination); that the first truce was "signed" on June 10, 1948 (it was never "signed," and it began on June 11); that in August, 1948 "the successful Israeli campaigns continued, leading to their complete control of Palestine, apart from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" (the Second Truce prevailed during August and September, and warfare was resumed only in mid-October); that the Grand Mufti fled Palestine in 1938 (he left in October, 1937); that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was "built ... in 1920" (it was founded in 1925 and constructed during the following decades); that Tel Aviv was "founded ... on a Saturday morning in July 1907" (it was in 1909); that the late nineteenth-century Zionist pioneers known as the Biluim established "the first Zionist settlements in Palestine" (they did not), and that they "were led" by Moshe Lilienblum and Leon Pinsker (they were not); that "the Israeli Foreign Office ... translated [U.N. Security Council Resolution 242] into Hebrew in a way that implied that it did not have to withdraw from all the territories it had occupied [in the Six Day War]" (the resolution, in the authoritative English original, speaks of withdrawal "from [occupied] territories," not "the territories" or "all the territories"); that in 1979 there were "1.8 million [Palestinian] refugees" in Lebanon, and in 1982 "well beyond two million" (on both dates the number was around two hundred thousand); that Black September, the Jordanian crackdown against the PLO, took place in 1969 (it was in 1970); that the first settlements in the West Bank were established in 1968 (they were established in 1967); that there was an anti-Hashemite "uprising" in Jordan in 1956 (there were anti-Hashemite or anti-Baghdad Pact riots in Jordan in 1955, but not an uprising); that "the negotiations on Palestine's future produced [during World War I] three documents: the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration" (only the last focused on Palestine's future); that "in September 1918 the north of Palestine was taken quietly [by the British army]" (it was taken in battle, the Battle of Armaggedon or Meggido); that "300 Jews" and a similar number of Arabs were killed in the Arab rioting of 1929 (just over one hundred Jews and a similar number of Arabs died); and so on and on and on.

AGAIN, PAPPE'S ERROR'S are not merely a matter of sloppiness born of a contempt for that leaven of dullards, "the facts." The book is also awash with errors resulting from the writer's ideological preferences, his interest in blackening the Zionists and whitening the Palestinians. His description of the events of 1920 (in which Pappe proves the dictum that necessity—in this case, an ideological imperative—is the mother of invention) is surely a classic of the genre:

In April 1920, a Nabi Musa rally [a Muslim celebration commemorating the prophet Moses] clashed with the most aggressive of the Zionist organizations, Beitar, whose members

marched provocatively in the streets of Arab Jerusalem at the time of the feast, and a day of violence ended with deaths on both sides.... A [British] commission of inquiry, the Palin Commission, concluded the obvious: that there was growing dissatisfaction among the Palestinian elite with the British pro-Zionist ... policy.

In fact, Pappe's evenhandedness, while morally commendable, is out of place. There was no "provocative" Jewish march through Arab Jerusalem; there was no march at all. What occurred was an unprovoked assault on Jewish passersby and shops by a politically and religiously inflamed Muslim mob. The subsequent British investigation, embodied in the Palin Report, found that a Muslim Arab religious procession, incited by, among others, Haj Amin al Husseini and Arif al-Arif (a Palestinian journalist), had attacked Jews along Jaffa Road in Jewish (West) Jerusalem and then inside the Old City. Beitar, the youth movement of the right-wing Revisionist Movement, was founded in 1923, so clearly it could not have had a hand in the events of 1920. (Even a postmodernist can see that!) The Palin Report, acknowledging the pogrom for what it was, stated that "all the evidence goes to show that these [Arab] attacks were of a cowardly and treacherous description, mostly against old men, women and children—frequently in the back" (though, to round out the picture, Palin did attribute the rising tide of Arab anger to Britain's pro-Zionist policy).

Brazen inaccuracy similarly marks Pappe's treatment of the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. Pappe writes that the Arab Higher Committee had tried to "negotiate a principled settlement with the Jewish Agency" (it did not); that in "October 1936" the AHC "declared a general strike" (it was declared in May, 1936 and ended in October); that "in August [1937]" Palestinians assassinated "Major Andrew," the British acting Galilee district commissioner (his name was Lewis Andrews, he was a civilian, and he was assassinated in September); and that "quite a few" of the Palestinian dead in the 1936-1939 rebellion were women (there are no accurate figures, but there can be no doubt that only a handful of the three thousand to six thousand Palestinian dead were women, who generally took no part in the rioting and the fighting).

Pappe writes that "in the 1969 election, the moderate Eshkol could not prevail against the more inflexible Golda Meir" (Eshkol simply died in office, and his party, Mapai, selected Meir as his successor, and later, in the general elections of 1969, the incumbent prime minister Meir, heading the Mapai list, ran against, and beat, a collection of right-wing, religious, and left-wing parties); that there were one million Palestinians living outside Palestine by the end of the 1948 war (the number was no more than three hundred thousand); that "the fida'iyyun [literally, self-sacrificers or guerrillas] ... activities initially consisted of attempts to retrieve lost property" (this was probably true of infiltrating Palestinian refugees, but the fida'iyyun, set up by Egypt only in 1954-1955, from the first were engaged in intelligence and terrorist activities, not in property retrieval); that "Lebanon was destroyed in [Israeli] carpet bombing from the air and shelling from the ground" in 1982 (Lebanon was not destroyed, though several neighborhoods in a number of cities were badly damaged, and there was no "carpet bombing"). Again, the list is endless.

Where Pappe's ideological bent is not responsible for outright inventions and errors, it leads instead to narrative lopsidedness. He devotes a full seven pages to instances of Zionist-Arab cooperation and co-existence (which he calls "cohabitation") during the Arab revolt of 1936-1939, but only two pages to the actual revolt and its consequences. Surely the revolt itself was far more important than the handful of concurrent inconsequential Arab-Jewish contacts aiming at coexistence. And Pappe devotes a mere sixteen pages to the revolutionary upheaval of the 1948 war—surely the central event in Palestine's modern history—and two of those pages are maps. Still, 1948 does relatively well in this regard: the 1973 war—which Pappe describes as a "devastating Israeli defeat," echoing Arab propaganda, and the "bloodiest Arab-Israeli confrontation" (in fact, the war of 1947-1949 was bloodier)—gets about half a page. I should add also that Hafez Assad of Syria did not embark on the 1973 war in order to resume the peace process with Israel; he simply wanted to re-conquer the Golan Heights (and perhaps thus to avoid entering a peace process).

PAPPE DEDICATES HIS BOOK TO "Ido and Yonatan, my two lovely boys. May they live not only in a modern Palestine, but also in a peaceful one." His choice of the term "Palestine" rather than "Israel" would seem to indicate that Pappe is looking forward to a polity that will emerge after Israel's disestablishment or demise. He obviously supports a single bi-national state in all of Palestine. And he is no fool. He must know what such a state will look like. A bi-national state, if established tomorrow, would contain roughly five million Jews and four and a half million Arabs (1.3 million Israeli Arabs, including the Arabs of East Jerusalem; two million West Bank Arabs; and close to one and a half million Arabs of the Gaza Strip). There would be instant chaos, as Arab and Jewish communities would vie for dominance and try to settle old scores, and as the two to three million refugees from 1948 and their descendants, now resident in the West Bank and Gaza, would make tracks for, and try to repossess, lost houses and lands in pre-1967 Israel.

Moreover, were the "right of return" to be adopted—as would be demanded by Palestine's Arabs and the surrounding Arab world, perhaps with European endorsement—another million Arabs would pour into the country from the refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, instantly creating an Arab majority in the "bi-national" state. If that state were democratic, the majority would determine its character, and in fairly short order it would become an Arab state with a gradually decreasing Jewish minority. Without doubt, the Arab majority would pass legislation blocking further Jewish immigration into the country; and, equally without doubt, Jews would begin to leave.

But even without implementation of an instant or gradual return of refugees from outside Palestine, Pappe's binational state would quickly become an Arab-majority state, given relative Arab and Jewish birthrates. Palestinian Arab families have an average of four or five children (and this includes Israeli Arab households), while Israeli Jewish families tend to have two or three children. Within a decade or so of its creation, the bi-national state would have an Arab majority. I find it difficult to imagine what sort of life Pappe really believes that he and his children and grandchildren can expect as members of a Jewish minority in an Arab

state. After all, the Jewish minorities in the Islamic Arab world have fared poorly over the centuries, always subject to second-class citizenship and often to brutal oppression and massacre; as late as the 1940s they suffered from discriminatory laws and pogroms (in Baghdad, Tripoli, Aden); and by the 1960s they had all fled, or been expelled from, their native lands. Iraq, with one hundred thirty-five thousand Jews in 1948, has today about fifty Jews; Egypt, once with seventy-five thousand, has about one hundred; Morocco, with two hundred sixty-five thousand in 1948, has about six thousand. For all practical purposes, these countries have been ethnically cleansed of their Jews. Almost no Jews at all are left in Yemen or Algeria, and none, as far as I know, live in Saudi Arabia, Libya, Oman, Kuwait, or the United Arab Emirates.

A Muslim-dominated Palestine would be even less benign or hospitable toward its Jewish minority. After all, the Palestinians are not a particularly forgiving people (the cry for revenge seems to be on the lips of every suicide bomber), and what they have suffered at Jewish hands since 1947 will not easily be erased from their collective and individual memories. Moreover, the Islamic Arab world, including Arafat's Palestinian Authority, has shown little penchant for democracy. More generally, tolerance of the "other" is not a deeply ingrained tradition in the Muslim Arab world, as the fate of the Arab world's Christian communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will attest. (Look at Sudan.) Nor would the social and economic gap between the Jews and the Arabs of Pappe's bi-national state make for peaceful co-existence.

So I doubt that Ido and Yonatan will enjoy life in their new Muslim Arab-dominated environment. My prediction is that, whatever their politics, they will quickly repair to Europe or America. And if, contrary to logic, they stick it out, they will enjoy an existence infinitely less free, creative, and pleasant than that currently enjoyed by Israel's Arab minority citizens. This truly is an appalling book. Anyone interested in the real history of Palestine/Israel and the PalestinianIsraeli conflict would do well to run vigorously in the opposite direction.

— *Benny Morris teaches Middle East history at Ben-Gurion University. He is the author, most recently, of* The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited (Cambridge University Press). *This article appeared in the March 22, 2004 issue of The New Republic*.

Benny Morris's Lies About My Book

By Ilan Pappe, April 5, 2004. Originally published on the History News Network.

In March the New Republic *published Benny Morris's harsh review of Illan Pappe's new book,* A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*. Mr. Pappe wrote a response and asked TNR to publish it. TNR declined. His response appears below.*

Benny Morris tells his readers in the *New Republic* that he and I walked a stretch of road together as 'revisionist historians.' This is how an article begins with a factual mistake; an article which is meant to show that my works are a fabrication. This is a falsification of history as I could not be a partner to a person who had already in 1988 held views I found morally unacceptable. I was privy to the views he only aired later on, already in our first meeting back in the late 1980s. I was fully aware — as he seemed to trust me — of his abominable racist views about the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. Unlike others, I did not feel that his good qualities as a chronologist which came out in his most famous book, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Cambridge 1987) — he was never a proper historian — and especially his invaluable contribution in aggregating data for us on the 1948 ethnic cleansing — made up for his bigotry and narrow—mindedness.

In fact, there was, and still is a direct line between the kind of chronology he provided in the 1980s — which had very little analysis and therefore hid well his justification for ethnic cleansing — and his recent overconfidence that he can provide such analyses in his latest works instead of his conventional collection of facts. Such an attempt was made in his *Righteous Victims* which came out in 1999: a book in which analysis was replaced by his right- wing ideologies. It was much easier to accept him as a data collector — without much ideology — than his new presumptuous posture of a historian who shares with us his views. Now that we know all we want to know about his views, and much more I suspect, we can only long for the old Morris.

The debate between us is on one level between historians who believe they are purely objective reconstructers of the past, like Morris, and those who claim that they are subjective human beings striving to tell their own version of the past, like myself. When we write histories, we built arches over a long period of time and we construct out of the material in front of us a narrative. We believe and hope that this narrative is a loyal reconstruction of what happened — although as was discovered by historiographers Morris had never bothered to read — we can not ride a train back in time to check it.

Narratives of this kind, when written by historians involved deeply in the subject matter they write about, such as in the case of Israeli historians who write about the Palestine conflict, is motivated also — and this is not a fault but a blessing — by a deep involvement and a wish to make a point. This point is called ideology or politics. Zionist historians wanted to prove that Zionism was valid, moral and right and Palestinian historians wished to show

that they were victimized and wronged. Morris wanted also to make a point recently — that ethnic cleansing of Palestinians by Jews was justified in the past and would be acceptable in the future. Lately he shared with us some other views that explain his listing of what he calls the 'factual' mistakes in my book — that of viewing all the Arabs and all the Muslims as barbarians and primitive people. This also applies to their documents, sources and histories. Anyone who argues with him about these ideas is 'factually' wrong.

I had a different point to make: I condemned the uprooting of the Palestinians and the violence inflicted on them, as well as the de-Arabization of Jews who came from Arab countries to Israel, the imposition of military rule on Palestinians in Israel before 1967 and the defacto Apartheid policies put in place after 1967. I also cry out against the callous Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. I do it not only as human being, but also as Jew, who feels appalled that such crimes can be committed by Jews after the Holocaust. I studied history to find out why it happened and gave answers through analyzing Zionist ideology, the historical colonialist context in which Zionism emerged and so on.

When something is burning in your bones you might mistake names and dates as did Morris in his review in the *New Republic* when he smeared my friend Avi Shlaim who fell from grace in Morris's eyes because of his Zionism. Morris accuses Shlaim for identifying with a British diplomat of the 1940s whom he calls James Troutbeck and whom he sees as an anti-Semite. There was never such a person. Morris probably means John Troutbeck who was not an anti-Semite as Morris writes, quite the contrary.

Does this misspelling of the name, or that of almost all the Arab and Palestinian names he mentions in his first book disable us from understanding the points he makes or miss the zeal with which he drives them home? Or does his manipulation of the Ben-Gurion diary's text, as has been exposed unfortunately by a rival of both of us, Ephraim Karsh (who rejects the 'new history' but none the less exposed a serious gap between Morris' text and the original diary of Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel) of all people, undermine our respect for his work? Not in my books at least. I am worried about moral issues not the natural human follies of professional historians.

But Morris wants to persuade us that this is not the nature of the historiographical debate. His view as stated in the *New Republic* article is: "that while historians, as citizens, had political views and aims, their scholarly task was to arrive at the truth about the historical event or process, to illuminate the past as objectively and accurately." The "noble dream," an American historian called it in the beginning of the last century. But this in Morris's case is not a noble dream — as he is not a dreamer like myself — this is pure cynicism. An Israeli historian who justifies ethnic cleansing, writes about it in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (and even recently republished an updated version of this book) cannot claim to be a "neutral" historian.

Why did he twice write the book on that episode in history? Just by sheer accident? Morris tells us in the preface to the updated book on the 1948 war that new material prompted him to revise the book. But in fact this is not what distinguishes his two books. The first was written at a time when it was *bon ton* to be a 'peacenik' and his version of history was that the ethnic cleansing in Palestine (the massive expulsion of about 750,000 Palestinians in 1948) was not the result of a master plan. It happened through a war and therefore there was no Israeli accountability or direct responsibility — a narrative that fitted the peace camp at the time. But with such views after Netanyahu's victory in the 1996 elections it was difficult to get professorship in an Israeli university. This is when the shift began.

And it was even easier to get tenure and professorship he gladly found out if he would air the set of views he believed in any way. So when the second Intifada broke out, our charlatan finds out that the *bon ton* in Israel has shifted to the right. In his new book the ethnic cleansing becomes a master plan that is criticized by Morris for not being efficient enough as too many Palestinians were left in their houses (almost 10 percent of those living within the Jewish State). Nonetheless, the ethnic cleansing is now represented as a wise foresight of the Israeli leadership at time that should be repeated once more. This is not based on new evidence, but on an ideological twist.

Thus the strong conviction Morris expresses in the following way that "my own view is that the historian must base his work on the primary sources, that is, on contemporaneous documents" is not the basis for his historical conviction. His primary sources come almost exclusively from the IDF archives. With the help of these documents he reconstructs 1948 (he used some English sources in a lame and insignificant biography he wrote on Glubb, I believe, but this is an exception not the rule).

Israeli officers lied in the past and lie in the present — but they are the basis for the true history for Morris. In fact, when his ideology changed he guessed they told only part of the truth about the ethnic cleansing and therefore he was willing to be a post-modernist and read into, and outside, the texts. But his picture of the 1948 war will never be complete. There are plenty of Arab and Palestinian documents, but Morris who cannot read Arabic, will not be able to use them.

Morris feels that his strongest card against me is my "sloppiness" which is structural and therefore he lists an endless number of mistakes. He finds them all in my recent book, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). This book tells the history of Palestine from the point of view of its workers, peasants, children, women and all the subaltern groups that make the society and not its political elite. It is also a book that wishes to see Jews and Palestinians living one day in one state.

There are, according to Morris, to begin with: the grand mistakes. Here they are. The first, that the Palestinians were the main victims of the conflict (in the last two hundred years). I

think even the majority of the readers of the *New Republic* are familiar with that fact. But for someone who regards the Arabs as barbarians and almost semi-human it is clear that their suffering is not equal to that of the civilized Zionists.

Secondly, there was no Palestinian feminism or women's participation in the national struggle; nor were they organized. Morris does not only lack Arabic, he does not as a rule read or quote any work of Palestinian women — or for that matter other women's work or Palestinian male historians. "There are no good Palestinian historians" he told a crowded hall sitting next to me and Edward Said in 1998. My knowledge and reading, and indeed working with feminist historians, is a "factual" mistake. Take the question of women casualties — he uses only Israeli sources to show that he is right and I am wrong.

Yes, I use Palestinian sources for the Intifada: they seem to me to be more reliable, I admit. In his ignorance, and as he has not been in the occupied territories for years, which I visit regularly, he claims that, ever since 1988, that Islamic fundamentalism restricted women's participation in the confrontation with the occupying forces. Ten minutes from where he lives he could had witnessed the first demonstration of the present Intifada. Only women — many of them veiled — participated in it (in the unfulfilled hope that the Israeli army would not shoot them). But even East Jerusalem, its history and, yes, even its documents are not "legitimate" bricks in the house of history he builds.

Thirdly, he claims I invent a history of children; presumably they are not a subject matter in his reading as they do not appear in the political archives. Do the readers of the *New Republic* really need reminding of the great works done on children's history here, in Europe and the Middle East? But, Morris never read one work on Ottoman history therefore he claims no one can write the history of children in Palestine. The IDF archives, his shrine of truth, has not written about them, unless they were victims of massacres.

His fourth point is that I have not mentioned Bar-Kochva — a Jewish hero who fought against the Romans. This allegation comes from someone who says in the beginning of this article that he is on the left. Yes we know that in the name of Bar-Kochva and other Jews who had roamed Palestine two thousands years ago, Palestinians were expelled from their homes. But I thought, as Morris says in the beginning of the article, he came to deconstruct Zionist historiography not to propagate it.

Then there are the smaller mistakes. In some cases he just openly lies. For instance I write in the book in page 108: "The Palmach, the Stern Group and Menachem Begin's Irgun would emerge at the end of the mandate." Morris writes in order to inflate the list of "fabrications": "according to Pappe, the Stern Gang and the Palmach existed before the Revolt" (without giving a page number of course).

Why does he lie openly? I hope this is out of commitment to his new cause and not malice. On page 293 I write that Ben Gurion became the chairman of the Jewish Agency in 1935. Morris writes: "according to Pappe, Ben-Gurion in 1929 was the chairmen of the Jewish Agency." And so on and so forth, every fact, apart from two or three, is being brought before the readers as a sheer lie. But of course he needs this list so as to show that in what counts — minute details — there is no end to my mistakes. Well, it seems to recap on E. H. Carr's dictum that to praise the historian for his facts is like praising the architect for the timber of the wood. Morris's timber is not of best quality, and his architecture is monstrous.

Morris attributes my mistakes for being almost a Palestinian. The moment you are a Palestinian you can only be a bad historian. He detests, as he admits, my siding with the Palestinian narrative of disputed events, such as the debate over the question of who provoked the 1920 and the 1929 riots. Morris relies on the British reports when they endorsed the Zionist claims and disregards the British reports when they endorse the Palestinian claims. I probably do the opposite in many cases, I admit it; he does not. He is an "objective" historian.

Similarly amazing is the way Morris treats things he does not know. Take for example the following sentence: "Brazen inaccuracy similarly marks Pappe's treatment of the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. Pappe writes that the Arab Higher Committee had tried to "negotiate a principled settlement with the Jewish Agency (it did not)." Why did it not — Morris says so. Well the historian Yizhar Herzog mined the beloved archives of Morris — the Zionist Archives — and has given us a detailed picture of these negotiations.* In his haste Morris even contradicts himself when he disagrees with the figure I gave for the number of refugees living outside Palestine in the end of the 1948 war, which is based, among other things on his own work. In other cases, he echoes Israeli propaganda when he claims no damage was inflicted on Lebanon in the 1982 war.

My book has in it mistakes of the dates, names and numbers as do his books. We should all try and minimize them to note, I agree. Very few of us succeed and one can only hope to become perfect in the next work — which has not as yet been written (the Well Kept Secret among historians who served as readers for other historians). They should not however be pointed out as part of an ideology or a basis for ad hominem attack. Worse, a reviewer is not allowed to lie openly about them as Morris does.

Finally, Morris decided to involve my two boys, whom he knows well, in his narrative. They, he explains to the readers, would be the first ones to leave Palestine or to be killed there, if my political vision would become a reality. My boys know Morris: they have met him. They also have met all my Palestinian friends. I leave to the readers to decide with whom among my visitors and friends they would wish to share the land of Palestine. They have several advantages: they are learning Arabic, they do not distinguish between my friends according

to nationality or religion and I hope they will never grow to be mature supporters of massacres, ethnic cleansing and bloodshed.

Unlike Morris, they do not tell my Palestinian students that if there were to be too many of them — as a result of the right of return or birth — it is the end of civilization (as the Nazis had told the Jews). They are lucky to be growing up in an atmosphere where maybe they got Adolf Hitler's birthdate wrong by a year, but they will do all they can to prevent the Nazi venom from slipping through the veins of its own and ultimate victims who came and colonized Palestine, uprooted its population and occupied and brutalized many of them. Morris will probably feel unwelcome in such as society of equality between people and races and yet would write its history and claim to be "objective" about it all.

*****See his article 'Negotiations between the Jewish Agency and the Palestinians' in Ilan Pappe (ed.), *Jewish-Arab Relationship in Mandatory Palestine; A New Approach to the Historical Research,* Givat Haviva 1992, pp. 11-42.

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The Liar as Hero

Benny Morris, March 17, 2011. *Originally published on The New Republic.*

The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: The Husaynis, 1700-1948
By Ilan Pappe
(University of California Press, 399 pp., $29.95)

Out of the Frame: The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Israel
By Ilan Pappe
(Pluto Press, 246 pp., $22)

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine
By Ilan Pappe
(Oneworld, 313 pp., $14.95)

I.

At best, Ilan Pappe must be one of the world's sloppiest historians; at worst, one of the most dishonest. In truth, he probably merits a place somewhere between the two.

Here is a clear and typical example—in detail, which is where the devil resides—of Pappe's handiwork. I take this example from *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. On February 2, 1948, a young Jewish scientist named Aharon Katzir came to see David Ben-Gurion, the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive and the leader of the Jewish community in Palestine. Two months earlier, the General Assembly of the United Nations had recommended the partition of the country into two states. The Zionist establishment had accepted Resolution 181, but the Palestinian Arab leadership, and the surrounding Arab states, had rejected it—and Palestinian militiamen began to shoot at Jewish traffic, pedestrians, and settlements. The first Arab-Israeli war had begun.

Katzir had come to report to the man managing the Jewish war effort (Ben-Gurion also held the defense portfolio in the Jewish Agency Executive) about an experiment that he and his team in the Haganah's "science branch" had been conducting. As was his wont, Ben-Gurion jotted down in his diary what his visitor told him. (Ben-Gurion's diary, a major source on Israeli and Middle East history, consists almost entirely of his summaries of reports by people coming to see him; very few entries actually enlighten the reader about what Ben-Gurion thought or said.) The entry reads:

Aharon: 'Shimshon' [the operation's codename], an experiment was conducted on animals. The researchers were clothed in gas masks and suit. The suit costs 20 grush, the mask about 20 grush (all must be bought immediately). The operation [or experiment] went well. No animal died, the [animals] remained dazzled [as when a car's headlights dazzle an oncoming

driver] for 24 hours. There are some 50 kilos [of the gas]. [They] were moved to Tel Aviv. The [production] equipment is being moved here. On the laboratory level, some 20 kilos can be produced per day.

This is the only accessible source that exists, to the best of my knowledge, about the meeting and the gas experiment, and it is the sole source cited by Pappe for his description of the meeting and the "Shimshon" project. But this is how Pappe gives the passage in English:

Katzir reported to Ben-Gurion: "We are experimenting with animals. Our researchers were wearing gas masks and adequate outfit. Good results. The animals did not die (they were just blinded). We can produce 20 kilos a day of this stuff."

The translation is flecked with inaccuracies, but the outrage is in Pappe's perversion of "dazzled," or *sunveru*, to "blinded"—in Hebrew "blinded" would be *uvru*, the verb *not* used by Ben-Gurion—coupled with the willful omission of the qualifier "for 24 hours." Pappe's version of this text is driven by something other than linguistic and historiographical accuracy. Published in English for the English-speaking world, where animal-lovers are legion and deliberately blinding animals would be regarded as a barbaric act, the passage, as published by Pappe, cannot fail to provoke a strong aversion to Ben-Gurion and to Israel.

Such distortions, large and small, characterize almost every page of *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. So I should add, to make the historical context perfectly clear, that no gas was ever used in the war of 1948 by any of the participants. Pappe never tells the reader this. Raising the subject of gas is historical irrelevance. But the paragraph will dangle in the reader's imagination as a dark possibility, or worse, a dark reality: the Jews, gassed by the Nazis three years before, were about to gas, or were gassing, Arabs. I note also, for accuracy's sake, that, apart from the 1917 battle for Gaza in World War I, the only people in the Middle East who have used poison gas against their enemies in the past century have been Arabs—the Egyptians in Yemen in the 1960s, the Iraqis in Kurdistan in the 1980s. So there can be no escaping the conclusion that Pappe introduced the subject, and perverted the text, for one purpose only: to blacken the image of Israel and its leaders in 1948. This is also among the purposes of *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty* and *Out of the Frame*.

II.

***Palestinian Dynasty* was** a good idea. It attempts to describe the evolution and the activities of one of Palestine's leading notable families, the Husaynis of Jerusalem, from their rise around 1700 to local and then "national" prominence, until their fall from grace and power in 1947-1948. The Husaynis over the generations were religious leaders and mayors of the holy city, and filled other posts as well, including representing the area in the Ottoman parliament. The most famous Husayni was Muhammad Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the grand mufti of Jerusalem from 1921 and the leader of the Arab Higher Committee (AHC), the

Palestinians' executive political body, and thus of the Palestine Arab national movement during the crucial years between 1936 and 1948. Thereafter only one member of the clan, Faysal, the son of Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, was to achieve real prominence and a measure of power, as the Palestine Liberation Organization's Jerusalem affairs supremo in the 1990s. Pappe calls Faysal "the most renowned Palestinian of the end of the twentieth century." I always thought that was Yasir Arafat.

Pappe uses the Husayni story as a vehicle to describe Palestine's history during those two and a half centuries, spanning Ottoman and British rule and the clash with Zionism, and ending with the first Arab-Israeli war, the establishment of the state of Israel and the collapse of Palestinian society and politics. The book's treatment of the successive periods is chronologically disproportionate: pages 23 to 91 cover the Ottoman years, from 1700 to 1875, almost two centuries; and pages 92 to 342 cover the seventy-two years of waning Ottoman rule and the British and "Zionist" years, from 1876 to 1948. In fact, there is far more source material for the later years and a relative paucity of material on the earlier period. But Pappe's real interest lies in politics, specifically anti-British-imperial politics and anti-Zionist politics, and not in distant Ottoman-era history.

The disproportion also reflects Pappe's worth as a historian. Let me explain. To cover the history of Palestine—a geographically small backwater in the giant Ottoman domain—and the activities of its aristocracy and their interaction with the authorities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one would have to spend many months in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul. There one would need to locate and pore over reports and correspondence from and about the relevant *vilayets* (provinces), Syria/Damascus and Beirut, and the relevant *sanjaks* and *mutasarafliks* (districts), Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre, in addition to the central government's deliberations and decision-making about Jerusalem and its environs. Pappe, who lacks Turkish, has not consulted any Ottoman archives. There is not a single reference to any Ottoman archive, or any Turkish source, in his endnotes.

Another source for the history-especially social and economic history—of Ottoman Palestine is the archives of the local *sharia* courts in Jaffa and Jerusalem. These archives, to judge from the endnotes, Pappe tapped only briefly, if at all, as if ticking a box. In one endnote he thanks Dr. Mahmoud Yazbak of Haifa University, "who guided me in working on these documents in the Haram [the Temple Mount in Jerusalem]." To judge from the endnotes, Pappe was for some reason deterred from spending time in these repositories.

Indeed, almost all of Pappe's references direct the reader to books and articles in English, Hebrew, and Arabic by other scholars, or to the memoirs of various Arab politicians, which are not the most reliable of sources. Occasionally there is a reference to an Arab or Western travelogue or genealogy, or to a diplomat's memoir; but there is barely an allusion to documents in the relevant British, American, and Zionist/Israeli archives. When referring to the content of American consular reports about Arab riots in the 1920s, for example, Pappe

invariably directs the reader to an article in Hebrew by Gideon Biger—"The American Consulate in Jerusalem and the Events of 1920-1921," in *Cathedra*, September 1988—and not to the documents themselves, which are easily accessible in the United States National Archive.

Those who falsify history routinely take the path of omission. They ignore crucial facts and important pieces of evidence while cherry-picking from the documentation to prove a case. An apt illustration of this delinquency is Efraim Karsh, in *Palestine Betrayed*. At one point he tells us, quoting a news report from the *Palestine Post*, that the Palestinian Arab masses actually welcomed the UN partition resolution of November 1947, which posited the establishment of a Jewish state side by side with a Palestine Arab state, when a thousand other pieces of evidence—Haganah intelligence reports, newspapers, monitored Arab radio broadcasts, and the simple fact that Palestine's Arabs went to war to stymie that resolution—tell us, with overwhelming persuasiveness, the exact opposite.

But Pappe is more brazen. He, too, often omits and ignores significant evidence, and he, too, alleges that a source tells us the opposite of what it in fact says, but he will also simply and straightforwardly falsify evidence. Consider his handling of the Arab anti-Jewish riots of the 1920s. Pappe writes of the "Nabi Musa" riots in April 1920: "The [British] Palin Commission ... reported that the Jewish presence in the country was provoking the Arab population and was the cause of the riots." He also quotes at length Musa Kazim al-Husayni, the clan's leading notable at the time, to the effect that "it was not the [Arab] Hebronites who had started the riots but the Jews." But the (never published) "Report of the Court of Inquiry [it was not a "Commission"] Convened by Order of H.E. the High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief, Dated the 12th Day of April, 1920," while forthrightly anti-Zionist, thereby accurately reflecting the prevailing views in the British military government that ruled Palestine until mid-1920, flatly and strikingly charged the Arabs with responsibility for the bloodshed. The team chaired by Major-General P.C. Palin wrote that "it is perfectly clear that with ... few exceptions the Jews were the sufferers, and were, moreover, the victims of a peculiarly brutal and cowardly attack, the majority of the casualties being old men, women and children." The inquiry pointed out that whereas 216 Jews were killed or injured, the British security forces and the Jews, in defending themselves or in retaliatory attacks, caused only twenty-five Arab casualties.

The bottom line of the Palin report of July 1, 1920, was that the Arabs "not entirely" unreasonably feared Jewish immigration and eventual political and economic domination, and that the Zionists had occasionally acted with "indiscretion" and political aggressiveness. At the same time, the report continued, in its complex account of the causes of the crisis, the British, too, through their "nonfulfillment" of promises, had contributed to Arab "alienation and exasperation," as had deliberate incitement by various Arab leaders and journalists. Taken together, these were the wellsprings of the Arabs' "panic" and rage. But it was the Arabs—the report concluded—who had resorted to murderous violence and

attacked the Jews in “treacherous and cowardly” fashion. The picture painted by the Palin inquiry, despite its clear anti-Zionist bias, was far more complicated, nuanced, and balanced than that conveyed in Pappe’s “history.”

About the 1929 “Temple Mount” riots, which included two large-scale massacres of Jews, in Hebron and in Safed, Pappe writes: “The opposite camp, Zionist and British, was no less ruthless [than the Arabs]. In Jaffa a Jewish mob murdered seven Palestinians.” Actually, there were no massacres of Arabs by Jews, though a number of Arabs were killed when Jews defended themselves or retaliated after Arab violence. Pappe adds that the British “Shaw Commission,” so-called because it was chaired by Sir Walter Shaw (a former chief justice of the Straits Settlements), which investigated the riots, “upheld the basic Arab claim that Jewish provocations had caused the violent outbreak. ‘The principal cause ... was twelve years of pro-Zionist [British] policy.’”

It is unclear what Pappe is quoting from. I did not find this sentence in the commission’s report. Pappe’s bibliography refers, under “Primary Sources,” simply to “The Shaw Commission.” The report? The deliberations? Memoranda by or about? Who can tell? The footnote attached to the quote, presumably to give its source, says, simply, “Ibid.” The one before it says, “Ibid., p. 103.” The one before that says, “The Shaw Commission, session 46, p. 92.” But the quoted passage does not appear on page 103 of the report. In the text of *Palestinian Dynasty*, Pappe states that “Shaw wrote [this] after leaving the country [Palestine].” But if it is not in the report, where did Shaw “write” it?

Actually, the thrust of the “Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929,” which appeared in 1930, is completely contrary to what Pappe asserts (though it does list some non-lethal Jewish provocations—peaceful demonstrations, a newspaper article—as among the immediate triggers of the eruption of the Arab violence). The report states: “The fundamental cause, without which in our opinion disturbances either would not have occurred or would have been little more than a local riot, is the Arab feeling of animosity and hostility towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future.” As to the riots themselves, the report states: “The outbreak in Jerusalem on the 23rd of August [the start of the riots] was from the beginning an attack by Arabs on Jews for which no excuse in the form of earlier murders by Jews has been established.” The disturbances “took the form, for the most part, of a vicious attack by Arabs on Jews accompanied by wanton destruction of Jewish property.... In a few instances, Jews attacked Arabs and destroyed Arab property. These attacks, though inexcusable, were in most cases in retaliation for wrongs already committed by Arabs in the neighborhood in which the Jewish attacks occurred.”

Pappe repeatedly asserts, in order to demonstrate an Arab readiness for conciliation, that the Palestinian leadership in 1920-1922, including Hajj Amin, was “ambiguous” about Zionism and “was willing to compromise.” This is nonsense. Indeed, Hajj Amin was tried and

convicted in absentia by a British court for helping to incite the murderous riots of April 1920.

To the deliberate slanting of history Pappe adds a profound ignorance of basic facts. Together these sins and deficiencies render his "histories" worthless as representations of the past, though they are important as documents in the current political and historiographic disputations about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Pappe's grasp of the facts of World War I, for example, is weak in the extreme. He writes that the "Ottoman entry into the war was triggered by an incident in the Black Sea in December 1914." In fact, the Ottoman Empire joined World War I with Russia's declaration of war on Constantinople on November 1, following the bombardment of Sevastopol on October 29 by the Turkish cruiser "Yavuz Sultan Selim," which was really the German cruiser *Goeben* manned by fez-wearing German sailors. Pappe tells us that Hajj Amin was commissioned as an officer in the Ottoman 46th division, at first serving as "assistant division commander to the governor of Smyrna," thereby betraying his ignorance of the relevant Ottoman administrative and military structures (lieutenants are not "assistant division commanders"). Pappe maintains that Jamal Pasha's Fourth Army "had failed to cross the Sinai Peninsula" in World War I—but the Turks crossed the peninsula and fought the British on the banks of the Suez Canal on February 2-4, 1915, and in their second invasion of Egypt, in August 1916, they reached Romani, just short of the canal. Pappe maintains that Allenby's conquest of Jerusalem in December 1917 "concluded the [British] campaign in the Levant," but of course it didn't: Allenby's army went on, in 1918, to conquer the rest of Palestine and Syria. Pappe notes that "the text of the Balfour Declaration remained unpublished" until February 1920, but it was published already in 1917. He refers to Raghib Nashashibi in 1923 as "a member of parliament"—what parliament?

Some of Pappe's "historical" assertions are, quite obviously, politically motivated, but they are mistakes nonetheless. He refers to "statements made by Jewish and Zionist leaders about the need to build the 'Third Temple.'" Husaynis often leveled that charge against the Jews, in order to incite the Muslim masses. But which important Zionist leader in the 1920s advocated the construction of a Third Temple? None whom I can name. Later Pappe reinforces this lie by remarking that "Palestinian historiography, including recent work that draws on newly revealed materials, suggests that the mufti's concern was not baseless, and that there really was a Jewish plan to seize the entire Haram [Temple Mount]." Pappe offers no evidence for this extraordinary assertion.

Pappe repeatedly refers to "Harry Lock" of the British Mandate government secretariat in the 1920s—but the chief secretary's name was Harry Luke. Pappe obviously encountered the name in Hebrew or Arabic and transliterated it, with no prior knowledge of Luke against which to check it: if he had consulted British documents, he would have known the correct spelling. Pappe refers to "the Hope Simpson Commission"—there was no such commission, only an investigation by an official named John HopeSimpson. He refers to "twenty-two

Muslim ... states" in the world in 1931, but by my count there were only about half a dozen. He refers to "the Jewish Intelligence Service"—presumably the Haganah Intelligence Service—and then adds, "whose archive has been opened to Israeli historians but not to Palestinians." To the best of my knowledge, this is an outright lie. All public archives in Israel, including the Haganah Archive in Tel Aviv, which contains the papers of its intelligence service, are open to all researchers.

Pappe writes, regarding 1939, of "Colonial Secretary Ramsay MacDonald" when it should be Malcolm MacDonald, the official responsible for the famous White Paper of May 1939. (Ramsay MacDonald died two years earlier.) He speaks of "Rommel's advance towards Alexandria" in "the summer of 1940," but Rommel reached Africa only the following year. He writes that in 1947 the Haganah immigration ship *Exodus* "was refused entry [into Palestine] and made its way back to Germany." Actually, the ramshackle *Exodus from Europe-1947* was intercepted by British naval craft and forcibly boarded. The disabled ship was towed into Haifa harbor, where most of its passengers were transferred to a seaworthy ship and sent back to Europe, most disembarking in Hamburg. I could go on. Suffice it to say that Pappe's contempt for historical truth and factual accuracy is almost boundless.

III.

Ilan Pappe has opted out of the Zionist dream—or as he would have it, the Zionist nightmare. About three years ago he moved from the University of Haifa, where he was a senior lecturer in the department of political science, to the University of Exeter in Britain. *Out of the Frame* gives us Pappe's explanation of why he chose exile. The title apparently derives from *Out of Place*, his late friend Edward Said's autobiography. But Pappe's book, while offering some autobiographical tidbits, is really a political charge-sheet against Zionism—a polemic, not a memoir.

He tells us that he grew up in a German Jewish family transplanted to the Israeli port city of Haifa, where he was born in 1954. As a youngster he was a Zionist, passing through the routine stations of high school, army, and undergraduate studies in Israel. (He even mentions his service in the Golan Heights during the 1973 war, apparently still a source of pride.) His *glissement* into militant anti-Zionism began, he recalls, in 1982, at St. Antony's College, Oxford, where he was supervised in his doctoral studies by Albert Hourani, an Anglo-Lebanese historian who in an earlier life (1945-1947) had served as a spokesman for Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian cause.* Hourani went on to become a major historian of the Middle East, and the author of the elegant and acclaimed book *A History of the Arab Peoples.*

Whatever Hourani's influence upon him, Pappe proffers another explanation for his disenchantment. He has a personal grievance. In 1982, he was chucked out of Peace Now, whose representative in Britain he says he was, because he had debated with a PLO representative in the House of Commons. (He doesn't tell us on which side he appeared.) He

was also asked by the Israeli embassy to speak at a pro-Israeli rally in northern Britain just after the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. He declined the invitation, he tells us, not just because of anti-Israeli sentiment but also because a few days earlier Israel's ambassador in London, Shlomo Argov, had been shot by Arab gunmen, and Pappe was miffed that the embassy had displayed a "willingness to sacrifice me"—perhaps Arab "terrorists" would gun him down, too. The assumption that it was dangerous in those days to speak publicly on behalf of Israel, as if Arabs were regularly gunning down such speakers, is nonsense.

Armed with a Ph.D. in modern Middle East history, Pappe returned to Israel, immediately landing an academic position. His prose, at this point in *Out of the Frame*, becomes more opaque and convoluted, and for good reason: he wishes to project an image of himself in the 1980s as a young crusading rebel sharply critical of Israel and Zionism, valiantly battling a rock-hard Israeli establishment, including its academic establishment. Israel's universities, he claims, were then (and are today) governed by an unremitting Zionist orthodoxy and dogmatism.

Yet Haifa University in 1984 accorded him a coveted position, and in fairly short order gave him tenure. Of this, Pappe writes: "Attaining tenure is a painful process for most young academics in Israel; it was doubly difficult for me given my views, which were already quite well known. And yet, as I noted, my positions were not yet crystallized in such a way as constituted a threat to the system, and I passed over the hurdles successfully." He adds, somewhat contradictorily, that his "radicalism" "enhanced the university's claim to pluralism and allowed it to boast of its openness to the world at large." So he kept his radicalism under wraps in order to obtain tenure *and* he brandished it brazenly, also in order to obtain tenure. Take your pick.

The truth is more prosaic. While Pappe, as a citizen, was a clear dabbler in radical politics, he still operated within the Zionist camp to the extent that the Israeli Communist Party, to which he belonged, posited the existence of the Jewish state within the framework of a two-state solution—in line with Moscow's position. At the same time, Pappe's academic output was inoffensive in the extreme. He claims that his first book, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-51*, which appeared in 1988, asserts that "Britain played a major role in allowing the Zionist movement to found a state in Palestine through the ethnic cleansing of its indigenous people." This is a misrepresentation. The book deals with British policy and, more specifically, with British-Jordanian relations—a subject that was covered much more thoroughly and insightfully, and in elegant English, by Avi Shlaim in his *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*—and it says nothing at all about what Pappe today calls the "ethnic cleansing of Palestine."

In this passage Pappe is laying claim to what he regards as early anti-Zionist laurels, to which he has no right. Nowhere in his first book is there a mention of "ethnic cleansing" or any of its equivalents. Indeed, Pappe curiously devotes less than one page of *Britain and the Arab-*

Israeli Conflict to a sub-section titled "The Responsibility for the Creation of the Refugee Problem," where he asserts, rather feebly and neutrally, that the British had two views on the matter: that the Jews alone were to blame, and that it was "the AHC [that was responsible] for encouraging the exodus in the cases of Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem." Nowhere did the younger, more honest Pappe of the 1980s charge the Jews with expelling "the" Arabs of Palestine. Rather, he tellingly asserted that "the Israelis were prepared [in 1949] to admit joint responsibility with the Arab countries for the refugee problem by making a gesture and offering to repatriate some of the refugees." Two decades later, moreover, both sides appeared to accept the refugee status quo: "The Israelis ... hoped that the Arab states would resettle the refugees [in their territory], and ... the Arab states ... decided to exploit the conditions in the refugee camps as a political card against Israel." Today's Pappe would not let such outrageous truths pass his lips.

Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict was bland and hesitant enough (though, like Shlaim's *Collusion*, it did postulate a measure of Jordanian-British-Israeli collusion in 1948) to enable Pappe to get a position in an Israeli university, where Zionist orthodoxy was still the rule and a sine qua non for obtaining a lectureship. The book made no waves, it was read by almost no one, it annoyed nobody. Pappe more or less admits as much when he observes, in his less-than-honest fashion, that the book "was written in the style of a doctoral thesis, which has a way of muting even the strongest critiques" and then claims that its publication elicited "hate letters and death threats"—another claim designed to enhance his selfportrait as a young rebel, which I find extremely difficult to believe.

In sum, Pappe is a retroactive poseur. But by the middle or late 1990s, after getting tenure, Pappe did shift gears into a full-blown radicalism, political and historiographical. By then he was advocating Israel's elimination and the establishment in the territory of Mandatory Palestine of one state, consisting of Jews and Arabs. That it would have an Arab majority and, if democratic, be ruled by Arabs was to be assured by a mass return of Arab refugees, which Pappe also advocated, and still advocates. One of his books is dedicated to his two children, whom he hopes will live in a better "Palestine." In *Out of the Frame*, Pappe defines Zionism as "a racist and quite evil philosophy of morality and life." The language is fully as virulent as Hamas's, or worse.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, despite his charm and his charisma as a teacher, Pappe managed to alienate the bulk of the University of Haifa's establishment, and was for years denied promotion to associate (or full) professorship, despite a fulsome list of publications. His work may be shoddy, and it has grown shoddier with the years, and overtly propagandistic, but the denial of promotion was probably the result of political alienation and an unusual form, on his part, of uncollegiality. I have mentioned Pappe's "one-statism." But if truth be told, this is not what pushed the anti-Pappists to accuse him of "uncollegiality." What drove his Haifa colleagues to distraction was that Pappe, in the course of the second intifada in 2000-2004—when Israel was virtually at war with the

Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, while buses and restaurants in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa almost daily were being demolished by suicide bombers—publicly promoted an international boycott of Israel's universities, including his own. In the name of the embattled Palestinians, Pappe called on Western academic institutions to stop joint projects and cut off research funds ("divestment"), to cease contact and cooperation with Israeli academics, to reject Israelis' submissions to journals and university presses, and so on. (The paradox in all this is blatant: Israel's academics have for decades been at the forefront of criticism of Israel's policies in the occupied territories and toward Israeli Arabs. Those are the people Pappe set out to hurt.)

Pappe prefers to explain somewhat differently why many of his colleagues came to loathe him. He alleges that it was the "Tantura Affair," about which more in a moment, and not his boycott advocacy, that made him his enemies. Pappe's aim is to paint Israel's universities as bastions of ideological rigidity and Zionist McCarthyism, and to configure himself as their victim: a crusader for academic freedom crucified on the cross of ideological and historiographical doctrine. This is a stark misrepresentation of reality. True, from the 1950s through the 1970s, and perhaps even in the 1980s, Israel's universities were, in the humanities and social sciences, in all that concerned the history of Israel and of Zionism, bastions of dogmatism and conformism. But such a characterization is wildly wrong about Israeli universities since the 1990s.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the universities' humanities faculties—and, to a lesser degree, their social science faculties—kept out or marginalized anti-Zionist sentiment and dissent. Zionism, as represented by the Labor Zionist mainstream, ruled as the necessary framework for the understanding of Middle Eastern realities, especially the conflict with the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab world. Indeed, the conflict was simply omitted from the curriculum. (This was partly driven by something non-political: the prevalent Germanic view that "current affairs" were not worthy of scholarly treatment.) And the ideological pressure was such that in the 1950s and the 1960s even Zionist historians—but of the wrong persuasion, such as Benzion Netanyahu—were denied positions. (Netanyahu ended up at Cornell, where he became a prominent historian of the Spanish Inquisition.)

But things changed by the 1990s, partly due to the impact of the works of the "New Historians" (and the "Critical Sociologists," who gained a foothold, or more than a foothold, in Israel's social science faculties even earlier). Even more important, probably, was the integration of Israeli academia into the intellectually open university life of the West. By the early 2000s, departments of political science, sociology, Hebrew literature, and cultural studies in some Israeli universities had become bulwarks of anti-Zionism, in which professing Zionists can barely achieve a toehold, let alone tenure. And the history departments and the Middle East studies departments are also far from being redoubts of Zionism. In Israeli academia today, one will find the whole political gamut, running from

avowed Zionists to critics of Israeli policies to critics of Israel's Jewishness and Israel's existence to (a handful of) advocates of anti-Israel boycotts and divestments.

But Pappe prefers to portray his alienation from Haifa as rooted in his own courageous dissidence, his fight against Zionism and McCarthyism. In *Out of the Frame*, these are portrayed as coming to a head in the Tantura affair. In March 1998, a Haifa University student named Teddy Katz submitted a 211-page master's thesis titled "The Exodus of Arabs from Villages at the Foot of Southern Mount Carmel in 1948." It dealt specifically with the fate of two villages, Umm al-Zinat, on the Carmel, and Tantura, on the Mediterranean coast south of Haifa. The main focus was on Tantura. There, argued Katz, a middle-aged kibbutznik and a peace activist, the 33rd Battalion of the Alexandroni Brigade of the Haganah, the main Jewish militia that in the spring of 1948 was transformed into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), on the morning of May 23 massacred about 250 unarmed villagers after conquering the village the night before. Katz described a systematic Nazi-style slaughter of groups of young men shot and dumped into trenches dug by other Arabs who were themselves subsequently shot, while the village's women and children sat on a beach a few yards away.

Katz had been supervised by a Haifa University historian named Kais Firro, and had been encouraged in his research by Pappe, who served as his spiritual guide. The student had based his thesis on extensive interviews with refugees from Tantura who lived in the West Bank and in Israel, and with veterans of the Alexandroni Brigade. He had not worked in the Haganah or IDF archives, and his massacre story was based on no documentation, Israeli, British, or Arab.

The thesis was awarded a 97 by Firro, a Druze historian, and by two other professors, an Ottomanist and a social scientist—none of them experts on the 1948 war; and in June 2000, Katz was awarded an M.A. "with distinction." But by then the trouble had already started. In January 2000, the Israeli daily *Maariv* published a long magazine piece based on the Katz thesis, and on fresh interviews with some of Katz's interviewees, that in effect supported the massacre allegation. Alexandroni veterans complained, and the following month *Maariv* published a second piece quoting the veterans at length, in effect denying the massacre allegation. In both pieces, the veterans had denied that a massacre had occurred of the type Katz and some of his Arab interviewees alleged (though some had hinted at "dark deeds" having taken place).

Meanwhile the Alexandroni veterans hired a lawyer (a left-winger who had represented Peace Now in several cases) and sued Katz for libel. Going through Katz's taped interviews and his thesis, the lawyer, Giora Erdinast, discovered a series of distortions, discrepancies, and outright inventions. When the court was presented with these findings, Katz broke down—some said he suffered a nervous breakdown or a minor stroke—and agreed to recant: "I did not mean to say that there had been a massacre in Tantura.... Today I say

there was no massacre at Tantura." This was in effect accepted by the court as its ruling, and Katz was ordered to publish his recantation. He never did (it was eventually published by the Alexandroni veterans). Instead he recanted his recantation and appealed to Israel's Supreme Court. But the high court upheld the lower court's decision.

Parallel to this process, under pressure from several professors, the University of Haifa established a committee to review Katz's thesis and evidence. It, too, discovered distortions and discrepancies. In his thesis Katz had "quoted" passages that did not appear in his interview tapes. The university annulled the thesis, but allowed Katz to submit a revised version. In September 2002, Katz resubmitted his thesis, now expanded to 568 pages. Again, inexplicably, he was supervised by Firro. He corrected the misquotations but he remained unrepentant: the Alexandroni troops, he still claimed, had massacred dozens, perhaps hundreds, at Tantura on May 23, 1948.

The university appointed a committee of five examiners. But again it bungled the matter. Two of them were clearly not experts on 1948, and two of the others had a few years earlier published (along with a third historian) an apologetic book effectively clearing the IDF of a massacre in Lydda during the 1948 war. Three of the examiners gave the thesis less than a 75, effectively failing it. The university authorities then compromised again and awarded Katz an M.A.—but of the "non-research" variety, preventing him from pushing on to a Ph.D. within its precincts.

Both times around, Katz had produced a poor piece of work. But this did not mean that there had been no massacre in Tantura. I decided to look into the matter myself, starting with the archives. I found that there is no evidence in the available documentation to show that there was a large-scale or systematic massacre in Tantura. And this is strange, indeed unique, if such a massacre had occurred, because in the case of all the other known massacres of Arabs that occurred in 1948, there is some sort of written corroborative evidence—an IDF report; a British, American, or United Nations cable; a monitored Arab radio transmission. About some of the Israeli massacres—Deir Yassin in April 1948, Dawayima and Eilaboun in October 1948—there are multiple and detailed reports in available Israeli, British, and United Nations documentation. (In recent months the IDF archive has inexplicably and illogically re-classified much of the Deir Yassin material that was open to researchers in the early 2000s.)

Regarding Tantura, there is written evidence that there were small-scale atrocities during and perhaps after the conquest of the village, including the shooting of a handful of captured Arab snipers. And one IDF document, from June 1948, obliquely speaks about an act of "sabotage" in the village, without further explication. But no document even obliquely mentions a "massacre." There is not a single piece of written evidence from 1948 asserting a large-scale massacre (and 250 dead would have constituted the largest massacre to have occurred in the 1948 war). There are Israeli intelligence reports about Arab radio

transmissions, from June 1948, alleging that women refugees from Tantura who had reached the West Bank had reported cases of rape, robbery, and arson. But none mentioned a massacre. Moreover, oral testimony, elicited forty to fifty years after the event, about a massacre—or a denial of a massacre—during a conflict that is still ongoing and in which propaganda continues to play a large role, is not necessarily credible or dispositive, and cannot form the basis of a reliable reconstruction of events. In my view, then, a large question mark hangs over what happened in Tantura.

(In *Out of the Frame*, Pappe alleges about the massacre at Dawayima, in order to buttress his advocacy of the value of oral history, that "Benny Morris, an ardent positivist and empiricist ... reluctantly had to rely on interviews [for lack of documentation]." This is a lie. I interviewed no one about Dawayima. Had Pappe looked at the footnotes in my *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-1949* (1988) and *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (2004), he would have discovered that there are a fistful of documents—Israeli, British, and United Nations—giving details about the massacre at Dawayima, or at least alleging that one had taken place there. I made no mention of any interviews. But Pappe is not one to look at footnotes, documents, or archives. He already knows what happened.)

In my own inquiry into what happened at Tantura, I, too, interviewed participants from both sides—and I found all equally persuasive and credible. None alleged a large-scale massacre, but some reinforced the smattering of documentary evidence about smaller atrocities. Pappe implicitly concedes the ineluctable weakness of oral testimony about something controversial that occurred decades earlier in the course of an ongoing conflict, and so he asserts at one point in *Out of the Frame* that "there is also a Palestinian document, the language of which is far from vague or ambivalent. It appears in the memoirs of a Haifa notable, Muhammad Nimr al-Khatib. A few days after the battle he recorded the testimony of a Palestinian who told of summary executions of dozens of Palestinians [in Tantura]."

The problem with this passage is that it contains a number of falsehoods. No document "appears" or is quoted in the al-Khatib memoir. One may consider the memoir itself—*Consequences of the Naqbah*—a document, but that is not what Pappe says. In any event, the memoir was published in Damascus apparently in the early 1950s (it is undated), and was written by a Muslim Brotherhood cleric and politician from Haifa who was living in Beirut, to which he was rushed for medical treatment and convalescence after being seriously wounded in Haifa in January 1948, four months before Tantura. Thereafter he lived as an exile in Lebanon. There is no evidence that he ever returned to Palestine, and it is highly unlikely that he ever went back. It is unclear whether he invented his Tantura story, or recorded it on the basis of rumors or things he heard from a Tantura refugee (who may or may not have invented his story—in 1948 the Arab world was rife with rumors and inventions about Jewish massacres that had never occurred). The memoir does not tell us when, if at all, he met the witness from Tantura. Al-Khatib's memoir, which is full of

untruths on a variety of subjects, cannot be regarded as a reliable "document" about anything (though it contains colorful, and in part accurate, descriptions of the mass flight of Arabs from Haifa in April 1948, which al-Khatib probably heard from friends and relatives who reached Beirut). It may well have served as the origin of the tale of the Tantura massacre that re-surfaced in Damascus in the 1990s.

Since 2000, Pappe has emerged as the chief proponent of the Tantura massacre story and the main defender of Teddy Katz. In 2002, in *Al-Ahram* (in English, online), Pappe alleged that the University of Haifa had expelled Katz. Like much of what Pappe has written on the affair, this, too, is a lie. Now, in *Out of the Frame*, Pappe uses the affair to explain, and to justify, his move to England. He argues that his defense of Katz and of the massacre allegation so alienated his colleagues that they proposed his expulsion from the university.

He describes what he calls a "disciplinary hearing" in May 2002, a month after he had signed an international call for a boycott of Israel's universities, in which Professor Yossi Ben-Artzi, a historical geographer at Haifa and one of the founders and leaders of Peace Now, accused Pappe of slandering university departments and members of the faculty and generally behaving in a "non-collegial, unethical and immoral" way, deploying "lies, bad-mouthing and impudence." Pappe, for his part, says that he had violated "not a code of honor, but the precepts of a very inflexible ideology. I was prosecuted by those who saw themselves as the guardians of national history." Quite characteristically, Pappe fails to tell his readers that one of his University of Haifa critics, the historian Yoav Gelber, in his 2004 book *Komemiyut VeNakba*, or *Independence and the Naqbah*, himself revealed quite a bit about Israeli atrocities in 1948-indeed, Gelber uncovered, from documents, far more than Pappe has ever done, including information about what transpired at Dawayima.

In fact, there was no "disciplinary hearing" at the University of Haifa. What happened was that Ben-Artzi lodged a complaint with the university's disciplinary board and submitted a charge sheet against Pappe. But the board's chairman, Professor Jacob Barnai, refused to initiate proceedings, and the matter was simply dropped. In *Out of the Frame*, Pappe devotes five pages to a "disciplinary hearing" that never was. It seems that the university got cold feet because Pappe, as soon as the indictment against him began to materialize, dashed off a batch of e-mails to academics abroad, who promptly wrote the university condemning the "McCarthyite persecution" of Pappe (and Katz) and "the assault on academic freedom." Pappe relates that he received "2,100 letters of support." He quotes at length from these letters, mostly by academics who know nothing about 1948 or about Pappe's falsifications of history. One of the exceptions, Avi Shlaim of Oxford University (who opposes the academic boycott that Pappe advocates but is solidly in Pappe's camp when it comes to describing current Middle Eastern realities), is quoted as writing that the charges against Pappe were "politically motivated," and "evoked shock and horror." In any event, what happened to Pappe in Haifa was caused not by the Katz controversy or the Tantura affair, but by his defamation of the university and of his colleagues, and by his calls for an

international boycott against the backdrop of the exploding bombs of the second intifada. An offer eventually arrived from Exeter, and Pappe left for England.

IV.

Last semester I taught at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich. The seminar, attended by M.A. students and advanced B.A. students, focused on the 1948 war. About half the students were German, the rest from elsewhere in Europe. This past week I received one student's end-of-semester paper, titled "Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine May 1948-January 1949." One of the introductory paragraphs reads: "Ethnic cleansing is inhuman, brutal, and absolutely terrible. Often, a link between the Jewish Shoa [sic] and the Ethnic [sic] cleansing of Palestine is made. While the Nazis expelled and tortured the Jews during World War II, the Jews did nearly the same with the Arab [sic]. The brutality between the two situations is visible [sic]." But the student was apparently troubled by the "nearly," because in her "Conclusion" she added: "The ethnic cleansing operations from 1948 are often compared to the happenings during the 2nd world War [sic]. In this case, the Jews were on the same Level [sic] as the Nazis."

The paper, while also listing other works in its bibliography, was based almost exclusively on Ilan Pappe's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. It is a fine indication of the measure of Pappe's success, of his reach in polluting Middle Eastern historiography and in poisoning the minds of those who superficially dabble in it. This is unfortunate, even tragic.

In *Out of the Frame*, Pappe complains that Yoav Gelber had referred to him, during the University of Haifa troubles, as Israel's "Lord Haw-Haw." That was the name given by the British media to William Joyce, an American-born Englishman of Irish extraction who broadcast Nazi propaganda from Berlin during World War II. He was tried and hanged by the British as a traitor in 1946. I do not think Pappe has any grounds for complaint. Lord Haw-Haw would have understood and sympathized with what he is doing, and the British are treating him rather well.

*CORRECTION:

Hourani at the time appeared to share in the racist prejudices of his age and society of origin. He wrote (a year after the Holocaust): "The abnormal position and history of the Jews has bred in them certain characteristics—suspicion, clannishness, a sense of insecurity and inferiority—which themselves in turn have become contributory causes of persecution." Hourani seemed to be suggesting that the Jews were at least partially responsible for what the Nazis had done to them (and perhaps for what Christians and Muslims had done to Jews during the previous 1900 years)—a passage more or less echoed in Husseini's writings a few years later.

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